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CITY OF SALINAS

SOUVENIR PROGRAM OF SALINAS CENTENNIAL

1874-1974

Brief History of Salinas to 1874

by

ROBERT B. JOHNSTON

and

Guide to Selected Historic Spots in the Area

With Cooperation of

HUGH McDEVITT

Published by Centennial Committee

City of Salinas, California

1974

Copyright Applied for 1974,
Robert B. Johnston

Dedicated to

DOROTHY VERA

in appreciation

of the many years

devoted by her to the

"History and Heritage"

of the

City of Salinas

and

Its Valley

SCHEDULE OF CENTENNIAL EVENTS

February

27 Steinbeck's Birthday—beginning of Steinbeck Week, opening of Steinbeck House.

March

2 Dedication of first Mayor's House—11:00 a.m.—open for tours from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. through the 16th.
Square dance—Armory—8:00 p.m.

3 Parade—2:00 p.m.

4 100th Birthday!
Concert Association performance, Salinas High School, 8:00 p.m.

7, 8, 9 Girl Scouts, "Girls on the Go" — Northridge.

8 Dedication of trees honoring past Mayors, City Hall, 11:00 a.m.

9 Centennial Card Party—1:00 p.m. by Salinas Business and Professional Women's Club—La Canada Club House.

April

8-11 Community Day Camp—Toro Park, with Centennial theme.

27 Beginning of the Festival of the Arts, running through May 7, 1974.
Concert, Utah Symphony and Hartnell Community Chorus—Hartnell Gym, 8:00 p.m.

28 Historical Art Show, 1-6 p.m.—Steinbeck Library.
Photography show, 1-6 p.m. — City Hall Lobby, continuing display for several weeks.
Unveiling of John Steinbeck sculpture—2:00 p.m., Steinbeck Library.
Concert, Salinas High School String Ensemble, 2:15 p.m., Steinbeck Library.
Concert, "Old Time Songs"—St. Cecelia Singers, Salinas Woman's Club House—3:00 p.m.

28 Concert, "Salinas Composers"—Friends of Music, Rotunda, City Hall 4:00 p.m.
Drama—"Lightnin' " by Salinas author Frank Bacon—Salinas Performing Arts, Salinas Woman's Club House, 8:00 p.m.

30 Organ Concert at Hartnell by Myron McTavish, 8:00 p.m.

May

3 and 4	Hal Ulrici's "Readings from Steinbeck", Hartnell College Community Theatre, 8:00 p.m.
5	Day of Celebration for all cooperating churches—some observances of Centennial in morning services. Concert, Hartnell College Gymnasium, 8:00 p.m.—choral and instrumental presentations. Cinco de Mayo Day—Mexican-American Day.
7	Concert—Monterey County Symphony, Madonna del Sasso Church, 8:00 p.m.
11	Salinas Woman's Club Garden Tours at Steinbeck House, 1st Mayor's House, East of Eden, ending at Woman's Club Clubhouse on Lincoln Avenue.
16	Grand Opening, Hartnell College Performing Arts Complex. Hal Ulrici directs "Tea House of the August Moon." Main Theatre, 8:30 p.m.
18	Boy Scouts' Scout-O-Rama, with Centennial theme.
19	International Day. International Review—Hartnell College, 2:00 p.m., and 7:00 p.m.
25	
26	A.A.U. Swim Meet, Hartnell College, all day event.
27	
26	Portuguese-American Day.

June

29	Filipino-American Day.

July

4	Independence Day.
18-21	California Rodeo.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

(Plate numbers correspond to numbers on centerfold map and to captions explaining each photograph).

PLATE NO.

1. Jose Tiburcio Castro Adobe of Rancho del Sausal.
2. Site of Battle of Natividad, November 16, 1846.
3. Adobe of Jose Eusebio Boronda on Rancho de la Rinconada del Sanjon.
4. Hilltown, original site of Salinas Post Office, 1854.
5. Official Map of Salinas City, 1877.
6. Prefabricated House of Jacob P. Leese, 1855.
7. Matt Williams Farm House.
8. Riker & Woods American Hotel.
9. Joseph V. Lacey Blacksmith Shop.
10. Fenton's Blacksmith Shop at Confederate Corners.
11. Iverson Brothers Blacksmith Shop.
12. I. J. Harvey House, home of first Mayor of Salinas.
13. East End School.
14. Eagle Drug Store and 100 Block of Main Street.
15. The Diamond Hotel.

16. and 17. Salinas City Bank and Abbott House (Hotel).

18. West End School.
19. The Methodist Church South (Southern). (Site of Recreation Center on Lincoln Avenue today).
20. First United Presbyterian Church.
21. The Methodist Church North (Northern). (North Side of W. Gabilan Street, near Lincoln Avenue).
22. St. Paul's Episcopal Church, original site. (California St. at Gabilan).
23. First Baptist Church. (First located on north side of W. Alisal near alley between Main and Salinas Streets).
24. Court House of 1878.
25. Carr - Williams House.
26. Odd Fellows Building.
27. Fashion Livery Stable and site of Opera House.
28. Steinbeck House.
29. Salinas High School.
30. The "Baby School".
31. Mike Hughes House.
32. Sam Black House.

The Beginnings of Salinas

By Robert B. Johnston

The City of Salinas was founded on adjoining parts of two Mexican-California Ranchos — Sausal (the willows) and Nacional. Originally, each one had been a grant of about 9,000 acres. The mutual boundary of the two ranchos, Sanjon del Alisal (big ditch or slough of the alders) meandered across the Salinas Plain, carrying the overflow waters from the Salinas River and the creeks emerging from the small canyons in the foothills of the Gabilan Mountains. In the early Spanish days this area of fertile soil and lush meadows had been the site of the Royal Presidio Rancho of Monterey. California's last Spanish governor and a small military force retreated to this rancho when a revolutionary pirate invaded and burned the capital in 1818.



1. Castro Adobe (c. 1823) of Rancho del Sausal, one of the two Mexican land grants on which Salinas City was founded.



2. *View southwest along San Juan Grade Road at intersection with Crazy Horse Canyon Road. Site of Battle of Natividad on November 16, 1846.*

James Bryant Hill, once the manager of Brook Farm in Massachusetts made famous by Louisa May Alcott, laid the foundation of Salinas during the early years of the Gold Rush, when, in 1852, he purchased 6,700 acres of Rancho Nacional on which he had projected great plans for the first large scale growing of grains and vegetables in the Valley. His holdings stretched from the Salinas River to the "big slough" on the north and from a little east of the present Salinas-Monterey highway to about the line of Davis Road on the west. Near the northwest corner of Hill's portion of the Rancho, a landmark known as "La Lomita del Rodeo" (little hill of the rodeo) still exists on the west side of Davis Road (or Clark Street) near the intersection with Central Avenue.

Hill set up the headquarters of his big farming project near the ford across the river. He drilled a well at least forty feet deep and began his planting that produced record crops of 60-85 bushels of wheat per acre, 100-149 bushels of barley per acre, "and vegetables in proportion". Messrs. Sweet and Keating secured a license from the County to operate a ferryboat driven by the power of the river current. In 1854, J. B. Hill became the first postmaster of the newly created Post Office of Salinas. A number of people began to settle in the community which acquired the popular but appropriate name of "Hilltown". It must have been a lively place, for a party of young men from Monterey went to a "feast" there "for a high old time" in the 1850's.

In spite of all these encouraging signs of success, Hill could not make it financially. His mortgage was foreclosed and the property divided among his financial backers. However, the settlement survived and the Post Office continued to be located in a series of stores and small hotels along the river owned by the postmasters: Massie or Massa, Bogart, Beard, Rickard and Davis.

Though one cannot credit him with the deliberate intent, Jacob P. Leese, a prosperous merchant of Monterey and San Francisco and brother-in-law of General Vallejo, should be considered one of the founders of the City of Salinas on its present site. While Hill was suffering the loss of Rancho Nacional on the other side of the big slough, Leese purchased the more than 10,000 acre Rancho Sausal for a little less than $6,000.00, a much better bargain. Leese probably built the first frame house in Salinas. It was a prefabricated structure of red spruce, first set up in Massachusetts. After being taken apart and shipped around the Horn to Peru it was sent north to its third and last site in California, beside the road later opened from Salinas to Natividad.

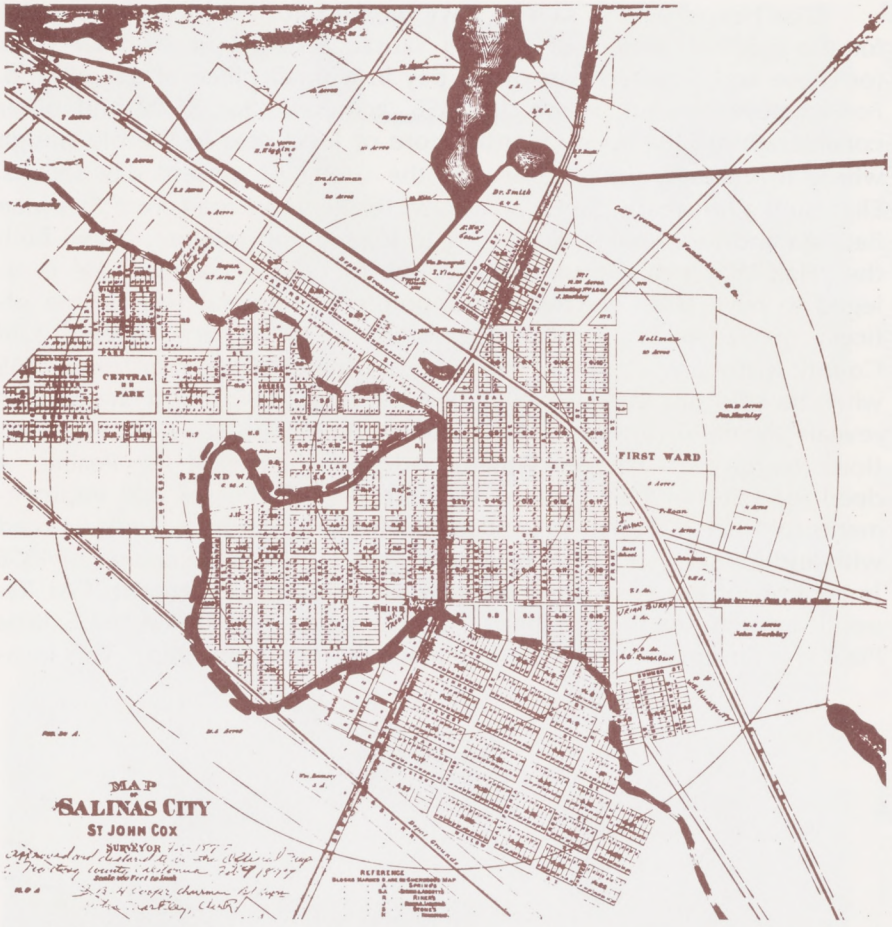


3. *Adobe casa (c. 1848) of Jose Eusebio Boronda, Rancho Rinconada del Sanjon. On Boronda Road at West Laurel Drive.*

Elias Howe, who is said to have worked at odd jobs of carpentry for the original owners of Rancho Sausal, probably did similar work for Leese and received part of his pay in a small piece of Sausal land. For whatever reason, Howe, in 1856, acquired "for $1.00 and other considerations", 80 acres, "a little more or less" next to the big slough where it makes a big bend around the center of present day Salinas. Elias built a house on the 80 acres next to the stage road from San Juan Bautista and Monterey. According to legend and folklore, Howe built the "Half Way House" and became the founder of Salinas. He is alleged to have been elected and appointed to several responsible offices: Justice of the Peace, Postmaster and Wells Fargo Agent. Old County historians state that he operated his establishment until 1865 when he sold out to Alberto Trescony. So far, a search of the records reveals the following facts: He received two appointments, not elections, to fill short vacancies in the office of Justice of the Peace. A deed recorded in 1857 granted full title to the 80 acres and improvements to Alberto Trescony for $810.00. In the meantime, Howe worked with and for Thomas Oliver Larkin in the presidential campaign of 1856 in support of the unsuccessful candidacy of John C. Fremont, first Republican nominee for President. Howe's "new house" on the Salinas Plain was designated as the polling place in Alisal Township. This loca-



4. Hilltown, Monterey Highway at Salinas River, flood of 1911. First Post Office of Salinas founded here by James Bryant Hill, 1854.



5. An official survey of Salinas City, 1877. Dotted line marks course of Sanjon del Alisal, the slough. Enclosed big bend (about 80 acres) acquired by Elias Howe, 1856.

tion did not become the site of Salinas Post Office until 1864 and in all other elections until that time the polls were opened in the stores and hotels at or near Hilltown. The postal records do not list Howe as ever holding the position of Postmaster.

Trescony, who owned hotels in both Monterey and San Juan Bautista, must be considered the town builder of Salinas for he built a small hotel, general merchandise store, blacksmith shop and stable, and held the property, while improving it through good and very bad years, until



6. Prefabricated frame house constructed by Jacob P. Leese (c. 1855) on Rancho del Sausal, a few yards east of the adobe.

1867. He employed Austin Smith and Charles McFadden in the early 1860's to manage the hotel and store which stood somewhat "back from the road with a big cypress tree in front" on the site of the Cominos Hotel of today. According to Paul Parker, the Tresconys' daughter, Rosa, was the first child born in this tiny community. Austin Smith accepted the appointment as Postmaster of Salinas in 1864 and the Post Office was moved from the river to the Half Way House—sometimes simply "Trescony's"—beside the slough. It has remained within a few blocks of this site until now (1974).

According to students of the economic history of California, the agriculture of the state passed through three distinct phases between 1860 and 1900, " . . . the era of cattle, the era of grain, and the era of intensive farming." This was certainly true of Monterey County which, "in 1860, contained more sheep than any other County in the United States — and [100,000] cattle . . .", almost entirely of the wild Spanish breed. Monterey County and the others along the coast to the Mexican border were all dubbed "the cow counties". As stated by Robert G. Clelland:

> *" . . . the gold rush (in this area) . . . destroyed little that was old, created little that was new . . . brought hardly any increase in population, built neither city nor village . . ."*

In 1862 Monterey County, which then included San Benito, reported only 4,700 persons, less than one per square mile. And yet, even before 1860 we have seen the small beginnings of City building and the trend toward general farming, and grain growing was evident in the lower Salinas and Pajaro valleys during the 1850's. Among the names of those who contributed to the early changes were: James Bardin, George Graves, J. W. Clifton, Paul Bradley, Jesse D. Carr, J. B. R. Cooper and his half brother, Thomas Oliver Larkin. These men did one or more of the following: brought in new improved breeds of American livestock, introduced dairy farming, cultivated increased acreages of grain, made use of new and improved agricultural implements, including ploughs, harrows, seeders, wagons (rather than carts), reapers and threshing machines. As early as 1856, a Mr. McGarrahan was assessed $750.00 for a threshing machine, grist mill, reaping machine, hay press and other personal property all located at Hilltown.

Though numerous factors were at work to bring about an evolutionary change in agriculture and lead to the growth of new cities, it was four years of disastrous floods and droughts which brought a rapid end to the pastoral age of the Spanish cattle. One of the most prolonged rains began December 24, 1861 and lasted for nearly a month. Many cattle drowned. The loss of livestock, fencing and other property in the Salinas area was tremendous. Heavy and unusual snowfall was also reported—six inches in the City of Monterey. The range land improved for about two years, but the fall of 1863 was unusually dry, followed by more of the same in 1864. From Monterey County in October 1863 came the report that " . . . extreme drought and hundreds of cattle are dying daily from starvation."

Assessor McGarvey wrote an account two years later of the effects on cattle:

> *". . . two years drought has been severe . . . of seventy thousand head existing a few years ago, only thirteen thousand are left . . ."*

This bleak and, perhaps, exaggerated report on death and tragedy contrasts with an optimistic view of the future described by William Bardin, Sr., within a few weeks of McGarvey's:

> *"Salinas Valley has increased . . . but very little in population until last year . . . there will be twice as many people employed here next year . . . There will be about 1200 dairy*



7. Matt Williams farm home constructed on 600 acres of Rancho del Sausal in early 1870's on road named for the owner. Alisal High School is next door today.

cows brought to this valley . . . besides where there will be a great many farmers . . . Nearly all the stock in this county died off last year . . ."

Carlisle S. Abbott, already a well known dairyman of Marin County, drove 500 dairy cattle to the Salinas Valley in 1865. On 9,000 acres of leased land including the present site of Spreckels, he was milking 1,500 cows and producing 200,000 pounds of butter annually by 1875, and owned the land. As predicted by Bardin, many farmers came to the Salinas Valley. Two of the great dairy operations which matched that of Abbott were those of R. T. Buell and the partnership of Laird and Kellogg.

The newspapers, periodicals and books on the natural resources of California published in San Francisco began in the mid-1860's to pour out a flood of favorable comment on the advantages of settling in the

agricultural valleys. Correspondents travelled through the Salinas Valley and wrote of its beauty and fertility. One commentator in 1868 prophesied that,

> *"When the projected railroad between Watsonville . . . and San Jose . . . shall be completed, and Monterey County is connected with San Francisco by iron bonds, much of the land now used for grazing will become too valuable for that purpose, and will be converted into grain fields . . ."*

The railroads did not reach Monterey County and Salinas before the change was far advanced. William Bardin wrote to a friend in Mississippi in the spring of 1869:

> *"Things have undergone such a change since you left here. Now you see extensive fields of grain in place of immense herds of stock. Nearly every acre of arable land of the mouth of the Salinas River and full width of the valley to the stage road leading from Hilltown . . . to Natividad is under cultivation and most to . . . Soledad . . . and occasionally a farm . . . for twenty miles [beyond] . . . in one or two years . . . all the land on Salinas [Plain] will be farmed."*

The *Overland Monthly* noted that in Salinas, surveyed in 1868 into lots of 50' x 130' @ $25 to $75, prices for the same lots were going for $250 by 1870. It must have been the prospect of such possibilities that drew Alanson Riker to the Salinas Valley in 1867 where he discovered Albert Trescony offering the Half Way House for sale, perhaps due in part to the effects of the great drought of 1863-65. His imagination no doubt envisioned the site as ideal for a new grain town and shipping point on the railroad. The distant snort of the "iron horse" became more audible as it approached Gilroy on the north. Riker, an energetic man of thirty-seven years, not only purchased the Half Way House, but also the store, blacksmith shop and eighty acres inside the big bend of the Sanjon del Alisal (the slough). Knowing the importance of publicity he soon made one of frequent visits to the office of the Monterey Gazette where he left complimentary tickets to a Ball to be given by "Riker and Wood of the Half Way House" at their enlarged dancing hall on June 20th. The music was to be furnished by "Riggs and Hudson's celebrated quadrille band . . . Riker will spread himself on the supper." Riker won the enthusiastic support of the editor of the *Gazette* who wrote:



8. Riker & Wood's American Hotel, 1868. Originally stood on site of Cominos (Abbott) Hotel.

"He looked blooming, and is a very good sign of the healthful locality in which his beautiful place is located."

A new store building was erected in the summer of 1867 stocked "with a large and varied assortment of goods." The new owner did not neglect the political front in his plans, for about the same time, probably with the influence of Jesse D. Carr, Riker became the eighth Postmaster of Salinas. He held another dance in November, this time a "Harvest Ball."

To the north and east two other communities were hoping to be the center of a new metropolis. J. M. Soto surveyed New Republic (Santa Rita) and sought to interest San Francisco financiers in building the railroad southward through his development and on to Monterey. A reporter from San Francisco wrote a glowing report on the "handsome village of Natividad" which he noted was on the great stage road where several new buildings had recently been erected. But the Monterey *Gazette* stayed with Riker, announcing in January 1868:

". . . Messrs. Riker, Conklin and Wood have opened an extensive mercantile business in Salinas City . . . a most excellent spot . . . the very heart of the finest grain growing and grazing section . . . with its salubrious climate and fertile soil . . . it is rapidly settling up with [an] intelligent, thrifty and permanent population . . . before many years [it] will successfully compete with any interior town in the State . . ."

When Riker surveyed his portion of the new city, the *Gazette* confidently heralded the event.

"Salinas City . . . is now prepared to become a large town, being mapped out, staked out, but not 'played out'."

Sales in the new store totalled $3,000.00 per month and an artesian well had been sunk at the Half Way House.

Ben Belville of the Watsonville *Pajaronian* also visited the town of "the Salinas" whose roads he found to be,

". . . just one series of chuckholes, belly deep in sticky adobe in the winter and hub deep in penetrating dust in summer . . . the one street . . . of necessity has to be called Main Street . . . in some remote period [Salinas] will be huge as she has got the land to do it [and] the slough to drain her one street."

As he departed he sarcastically remarked, "We now leave the City (if we can find our way out through the mustard) . . ." These remarks did not delay the growth of Salinas City. Lots began to sell more rapidly as another promoter, a Colonel Buckwell, took charge of the campaign. Little is known and nothing was found reported in the newspapers of the day about the business relationships of Riker and his partner Jackson or with Eugene Sherwood. However, Bancroft states that in 1867 Riker and Jackson with Eugene Sherwood "on the other side of the fence laid plans for a town." Sherwood's original survey map locates almost all of his portion east of Main Street. His greatest contributions to the new town were the wider streets and alleys and land set aside for a park. Sherwood also had a partner whose name was Hellman. Messrs. Ford and Sanborn of Watsonville purchased lots in Salinas and established a lumber yard "sufficient for the wants of the Valley" and the Monterey *Democrat* warned, "those who desire lots had better purchase at once."

This view of the situation could be considered an exaggerated "puff", but the town did grow rapidly and the population was not short



9. *Joseph V. Lacey Blacksmith Shop on southwest corner of present day Market and Monterey Streets (1867). L to R: Joe Connor, John Espinosa, Joseph V. Lacey, George V. Lacey, William Newmeyer.*

on optimism. The Harvey family, on its arrival in July of 1868, counted only twelve to fourteen buildings, some not yet completed. They were: Riker & Wood's American Hotel which stood on the site of the Cominos Hotel of today (1974); a livery stable kept by Riker's brother-in-law, George Wood; Iverson Brothers' blacksmith shop located behind the present site of the main office of Wells Fargo Bank; a butcher shop, site unknown; Brannan & Graves saloon on the east side of Main Street, opposite the American Hotel; Joseph V. Lacey blacksmith shop on the southwest corner of Monterey and Sausal (now E. Market) streets (Lacey's Auto Parts is still close to this corner); an unfinished building which Eugene Sherwood had agreed to build for Harvey & Company's General Merchandise Store; S. W. Conklin's Store about the middle of the east side of 100 block of Main Street; a partially finished building for Vanderhurst and Sanborn at the southwest corner of Main and Gabilan streets; another saloon probably owned by Silas Dean, site unknown; a small two-story building in the middle of east side of 300



10. Fenton's Blacksmith Shop at "Confederate Corners" — many southerners settled in the area — (1869) on South Main Street at Hitchcock Road. Building still stands.

block of Main Street; a building on the northwest corner of Monterey and Sausal (now E. Market) streets; and a Chinese "wash house shack" somewhere on Main Street. Mike Hughes in 1868 moved his harness shop to Salinas and located on the west side of Main Street, just south of the store of Vanderhurst and Sanborn (the Salinas Valley Insurance Company of John G. Hughes, grandson of Mike, is located on this site today). The I. J. Harvey family stayed in the American Hotel for a short time when they first arrived in Salinas. They were lucky, for a San Francisco reporter who arrived the same month just missed the pleasure of sleeping in the hayloft of the stable by being offered a bed by Brannan & Graves whose "excellent and well patronized drinking saloon stood across the street." The reporter gave a friendly and optimistic account of "Salinas City" and heard talk at this early date of moving the Court House from Monterey.

The business and professional population by the end of 1868 also included: W. J. Conner, builder of the *Capitol* hotel; Joshua Bradley Smith, M.D., Pioneer Drug Store; James H. McDougall, Jr., mobile water



11. J. B. Iverson and Peter Iverson Blacksmith Shop (1867). On south side of Gabilan between Main and Monterey Streets.

works; Richard E. Dyer, tinware and stoves; H. S. Ball, hay and grain dealer; John Henfield, photographer; J. A. Wall, attorney and two others (names unknown); Nathan D. Christie, guitarist; Mrs. Santos, restauranteur; a book store; two clothing stores; and a steam grinding mill. By the end of the year the young city boasted 125 buildings and half again as many under construction. Ford & Sanborn's lumber mills found it difficult to meet the demand. Members of the building trades outnumbered all other trades on the voting list of 1868. Next came blacksmiths, wheelwrights and wagon-makers.

Ben Belville of Watsonville made a return visit to discover that,

" . . . anything can happen in Salinas . . . The only things that showed no improvement . . . were the brand of whiskey and the condition of the streets, but what can you expect from a yearling . . ."

The San Jose *Mercury* predicted—

"The Salinas plain will support a population of fifty thousand souls . . . at no distant day."



12. Isaac Julian Harvey home (1868) as it stood on Monterey Street, in 1870's. Moved to 238 E. Romie Lane in 1939.

Some of the people of Salinas demonstrated the energy and enthusiasm of the community in the Christmas Eve Ball held at the American Hotel near the end of the exciting year of '68. Sixty couples danced until at least 5:00 a.m. with time out for a midnight dinner. From the Watsonville *Pajaronian* came the comments: "more men than women", "ran out of food", "rough but amusing" and "enough dancers at 7:30 a.m. for 6 sets." The Monterey *Gazette* in early 1869 published a letter from Salinas City which invited the public to *". . . come here [in] five years and you will see the Eden California."* Another correspondent in August 1869 thought the place to be a little less than "Eden":

> *"But Mark! though there are seventeen saloons . . . and another in the course of erection. we are informed, not a church."*

J. Selwyn Brittain set up the first newspaper in Salinas, the *Standard,* in December 1869, "located in a small shack on Gabilan Street immediately in the rear of the Eagle Drug Store." In his "Editorial Salutatory" Brittain promised an independent newspaper devoted to the



13. East End School at Front and East Alisal Streets (1872).

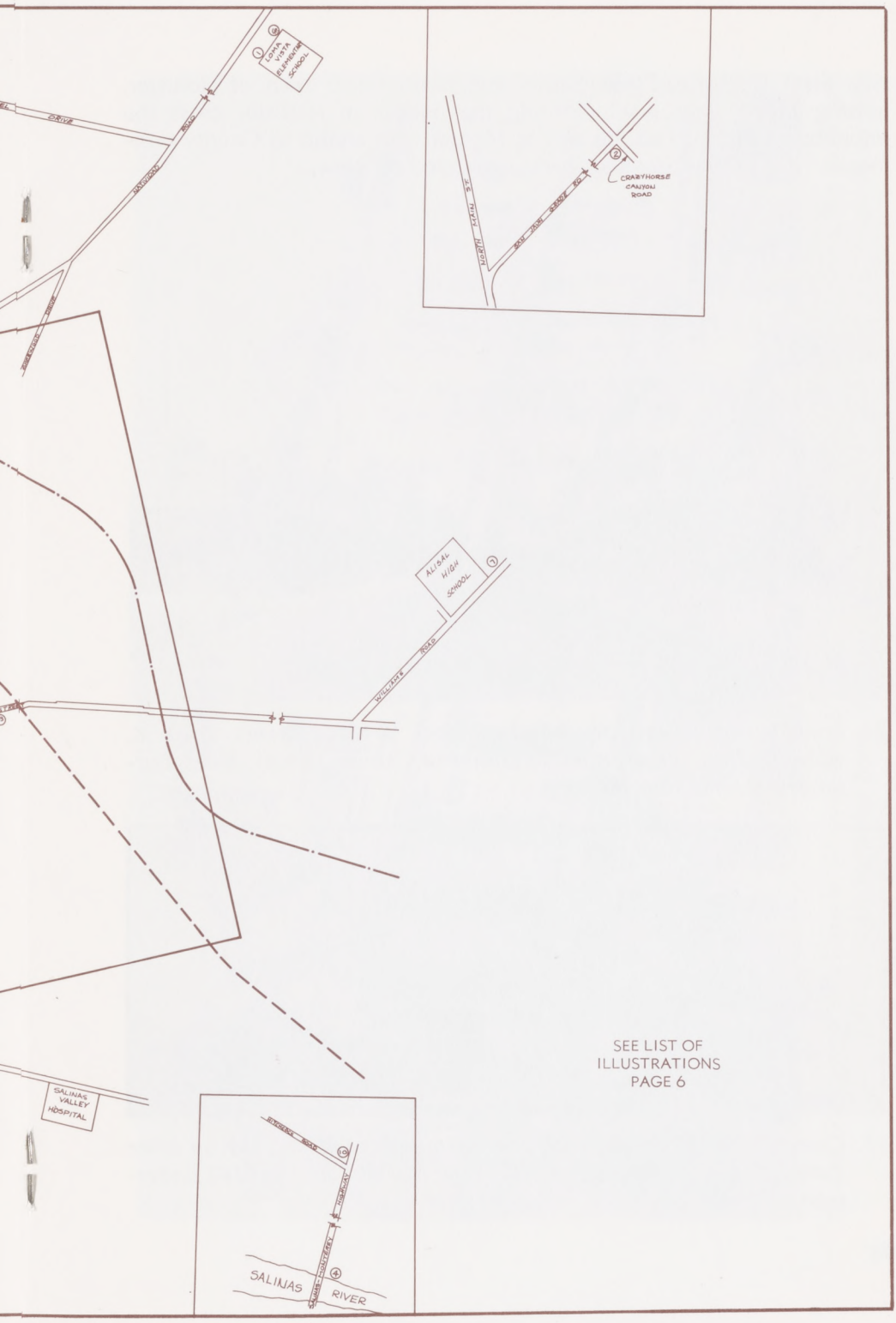
material progress of the county at large and the valley and city of Salinas especially. He shunned

> *"Politics [which] we shall leave to those who make a living in the filthy pool."*

But he stated two of the most important issues — very much poliitcal — of the day and his position on them. Projects of the four page "sheet" would include a railroad to the coast from any direction ". . . not material to us from what quarter the iron horse comes, so that he comes and . . . quickly" Monterey would best serve. The second project was the removal of the County seat to Salinas. " . . . the only proper place."

Several important groups and areas had other ideas. Hoping their selections would become important trade centers on a railroad line, subdividers and promoters laid out new town sites and sought to reawaken life in the old ones. J. B. Castro and his associates founded Castroville two years earlier than Salinas. J. M. Soto surveyed New Republic just as Riker began his development around the Half Way House or "Salinas City". Natividad on the stage line to Los Angeles along the foot of the Gabilan Mountains was growing and had its plans for railroad and Court House. Across the mountains the citizens of the San Benito Valley, then a part of Monterey County, formed the


WEST LAUREL DRIVE
EAST LAUREL
NORTH MAIN STREET
CALIFORNIA RODEO SITE
EAST ALISAL
WEST MARKET STREET
CENTRAL AVENUE
WEST ALISAL
EAST ALISAL
SALINAS HIGH SCHOOL
EAST ROMIE LANE
SALINAS-MONTEREY HIGHWAY
BLANCO ROAD
KEY
ORIGINAL CITY LIMITS
SOUTHERN PACIFIC RAILROAD
U.S. HIGHWAY 101



SEE LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS PAGE 6

San Justo Homestead Association and plotted the town of Hollister, raising a new issue. Why should the people of Hollister cross the mountain and travel all the way to Monterey to attend to County business? The Salinas *Standard* soon expressed its view,



14. Looking north along one hundred block of Main Street. Dr. E. K. Abbott's Drug Store on left at corner of Gabilan Street. Note mortar and pestle atop building.



15. Commercial Hotel, originally the Diamond, built in 1870 by Mike Tynan. Stood on triangle of land, now Bataan Park near 101 underpass.



16 and 17. *Salinas City Bank on left and Abbott Hotel on the right. Jesse D. Carr founded the Bank and Carlisle A. Abbott built the hotel, both in 1873. Buildings still stand on westside of one hundred block of Main Street incorporated into the Cominos Hotel.*



18. West End School (1874). Stood on site of present day Roosevelt School on Capitol Street near Central Avenue.

"Your taxes are too high—you will augment them by division. The county seat is inconvenient, you may have it removed . . . There is no necessity for the County to be divided . . ."

Nevertheless, the first bill, though unsuccessful, authorizing "division" was introduced in the Legislature in 1870 and the County voted on relocation of the Court House in June of the same year. A total of 1209 voted for removal, divided as follows: Salinas City—564; Castroville—518; Hollister—163; Natividad—4; Monterey received 609 votes. Various legal steps to hold a runoff election or prevent it were all defeated and the problem was turned back to the Legislature for clarification.

Meanwhile the Monterey *Democrat* ran a series of editorials in late 1868 and early 1869 favoring a railroad from Salinas to Monterey and pointing out the advantages of Monterey as a port in contrast to the difficulties at Moss Landing, near the mouth of the Salinas River then about one and one-half miles north of the Landing. The newspaper also promoted the building and improving of the wagon road from Monterey to Hilltown claiming that,

". . . unless this road be practicable for grain wagons the Salinas farmers will find themselves in painful straits this season."

Two projects for railroads from the Salinas Valley to Monterey received attention in 1869-70. A franchise from Monterey to Natividad had been sought in 1868. Ben Holladay and his North Pacific Com-



19. Methodist Episcopal Church South. The congregation was organized in the Spring School House during 1867-1868. Congregation moved to Salinas in 1870. First church building erected in 1871, was dedicated in May 1872, on Lincoln Avenue near Auburn Street, present site of the Recreation Center. It was first Protestant Church in Salinas.



20. First United Presbyterian Church, dedicated January 9, 1876. Building still stands on Pajaro Street.

pany proposed a line from Monterey to Salinas with a branch to Castroville from the crossing of the river. A group of local citizens headed by William Vanderhurst, C. S. Abbott, George Graves, James Houston and James Bardin suggested running a line to Salinas and to Watsonville from Monterey. The second proposal passed the Legislature but the Governor vetoed it. The *Standard* continued to promote the idea of a narrow gauge railway from Salinas to Monterey. Power held by the Southern Pacific Railroad Company eventually led to it being the line to build into Salinas in the fall of 1872. Before they did this, lines were built to Hollister and Pajaro which seemed to say,

> *"Cooperate with us by giving a right of way and depot sites and we will think about coming to the Salinas Valley. Maybe, we might choose to ignore the coast and continue from Hollister into the San Joaquin Valley and south."*



21. North Methodist Episcopal Church was organized October 23, 1870 and held services in various homes. The first church building was "usable by 1873", but not dedicated until February 1875. The "West Gabilan Methodist Church" was located near the northeast corner of Gabilan Street and Lincoln Avenue.

What would be the route in the Salinas Valley? J. M. Soto bought the antiquated equipment of the Salinas *Standard* in January 1872 hoping to use it to publicize the route through New Republic (Santa Rita). Further complications came from the formation of the Alisal Homestead Association, a corporation, designed to create a new town on the Alisal Rancho and provide sites for the county Court House, other public buildings and land for the Southern Pacific Railroad's right of way and a depot. The articles of incorporation were signed by Jesse D. Carr (Gabilan), W. S. Johnson (Natividad), Samuel Irvine (New Republic) and several others. It is said that Eugene Sherwood played the leading role in bringing the railroad to Salinas by giving the necessary land. He also offered a site on high ground near the depot for the Court House. I. J. Harvey added his influence through his personal acquaintance with Leland Stanford.

Paul Parker described the arrival of the first train on November 7, 1872, through the eyes of "pretty Miss Jenette Cockrill", 16 years of age, who watched from the window of her room at the Diamond Hotel near the improvised station,

> *". . . [she] could see the shouting, jostling crowd that was gathered [to greet] . . . the first train made up of a few cattle cars with a single passenger coach bringing up the rear. The whistle warned the crowd . . . the crowd yelled and the engineer waved his hand . . . something went wrong. The engineer couldn't stop the . . . train . . . for some extra-special ceremonies, it . . . crashed through a bumper at the end of the line and began making its own tracks for Los Angeles."*

It was in the same month and year that the Monterey County Board of Supervisors gave a limited status of incorporation to the Town of Salinas City in response to a petition signed by virtually all of the



22. *St. Paul's Episcopal Church. Original church located on California at Gabilan Street. Turned around to face Gabilan and remodeled into private home in 1890's.*



23. First Baptist Church was formally organized April 14, 1874. The first church building stood on the north side of West Alisal Street just west of the alley now known as Melody Lane.

voters. On November 5, 1872 the voters of Monterey County gave Salinas a majority of almost 800 in the vote to relocate the Court House in Salinas. Salinas voters cast 544 votes for the Court House but only 542 votes for the presidential candidates. Salinas officially became the county seat on Monday, December 23, 1872 after the canvass of the vote. Henry Myer's two story building on the west side of Main Street south of Alisal Street was rented to serve as the Court House.

A letter from Salinas to the San Francisco *Alta* in mid 1873, read in part,

> *". . . I greet you from one of the richest, most productive and thoroughly delightful valleys of the State, of which Salinas City is the chosen center.*
> *". . . the very air is musical with the echoes of hammer and saw, the roll of wagons and the clinkings of the reaper and threshing machine."*

As indicated, building had proceeded at a rapid pace and with the

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Keeps constantly on hand a full stock of goods in his line, well made and out of the best material.

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relocation of the Court House and arrival of the railroad new business ventures were undertaken with confidence. A significant project for the new "grain town" was the erection, even before the coming of the Court House and railroad, of the four story Salinas City (Flour) Mills in 1870-1871 by William Brumwell. A bank had been promised within sixty days of the removal of the Court House. By the spring of 1873 Jesse D. Carr led in the organization of the Salinas City Bank—first in the county — with capital stock of $200,000. After Carr, the largest investors locally were C. S. Abbott, A. B. Jackson, Z. Hebert, William Vanderhurst, William S. Johnson and George Pomeroy. The local papers described the new bank building, adjoining Abbott's new hotel on the south, which opened in September 1873, as "expensive ($15,000) yet appropriate and elegant." C. S. Abbott had purchased the American Hotel in March 1873 and announced plans for a new three story brick hotel, 126 feet front and 60 feet deep at a cost of $20,000. The old building would serve as "an appendage" to the new hotel. It did serve in this capacity until demolished in January 1974 to make way for a street extension. For the comfort of their patrons, the bank and hotel arranged with the Pacific Asphaltum Company to lay "durable

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Is now prepared to meet its patrons and fill all orders for Lumber of every grade, kind and description.
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Material first-class and prices the lowest. You will find us at

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JOHN TYNAN, Proprietor.

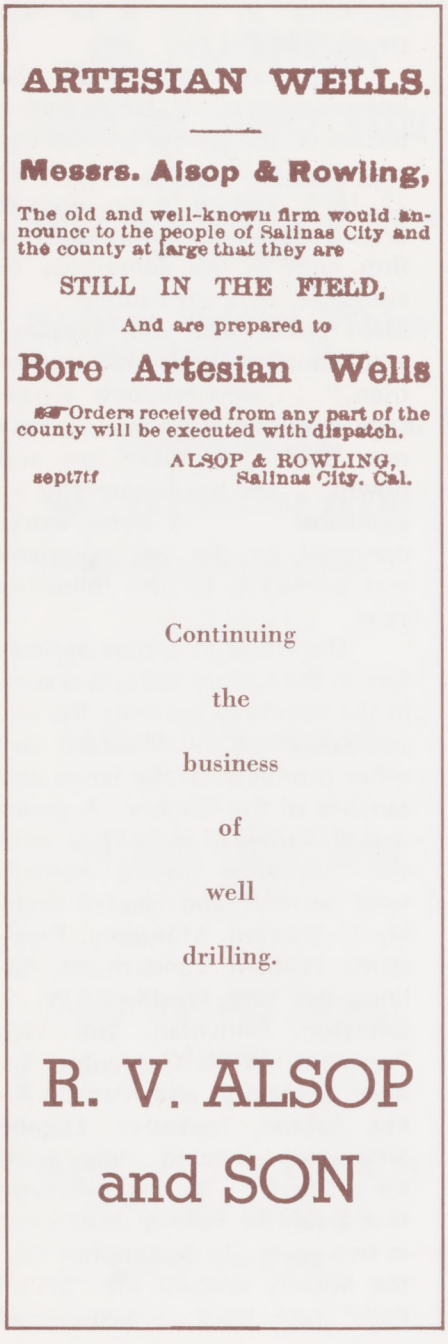
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sidewalks" in front of the new structures.

The Gas Works under the management of Mr. James Hagan turned on the gas for general use on Saturday evening, November 22, 1873. The air in the pipes at first led some ". . . to express a firm faith in the superiority of kerosene, or even candles . . ." Main Street was well supplied with lamps to assist the pedestrian ". . . who attempts a passage over the sidewalks as they now exist . . . these ups and downs . . . are too frequent to be agreeable . . ." A water works operated by the gas company was predicted by the following year.

The trend to a new agriculture in the Salinas Valley was seen in the efforts to promote the improvement of the livestock and other products on the farms and ranches of the County. A group met at Natividad in 1872 to form the "Monterey County Agricultural Society" and elected Bradley V. Sargent, Monterey, President; William Vanderhurst, Salinas, 1st Vice President; W. S. Johnston, Natividad, 2nd Vice President; W. L. Carpenter, Salinas, Secretary; and Alanson Riker, Salinas, Treasurer. Eugene Sherwood donated sixty acres for a "Park" with the provision that a Fair be held at least once in two years. To accomplish this, the Society erected the "Sausal Park" race track, a two-storied



"spectators stand" equipped with a bar and restaurant, numerous roomy stables, and an artesian well and windmill. The "Park" opened for three days of racing in 1875. But an adequate facility for exhibits did not exist until the Fair Association constructed the "Pavilion" in downtown Salinas in 1883 on the old Court House lots just south of the present (1974) site of Dick Bruhn's store on Main Street.

Robert Louis Stevenson, who visited Monterey County in 1879, wrote, "the new county seat, Salinas City, in the bald corn-bearing plain under Gabelano [sic] Peak is a town of purely American character." It was a community of business and professional men and their families who were attracted by the coming of the railroad and the profits to be made from grain and dairy farming. But they did not altogether neglect the other cultural and social aspects of life.

In early September 1868, the County Board of Supervisors recognized the birth of the new "American" town by creating the Salinas City School District out of parts of "Spring", "Alisal", and "Natividad". The County officials appointed F. M. Jolly, M. Hughes and William Vanderhurst to serve on the school board. The only building available for use as a school was the "house of Francisco Soberanes on Lower Main Street" which stood on the pres-

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ent (1974) site of Beck's Shoe Store on the west side of the 300 block. Vanderhurst sought for desks in San Francisco. He also selected Miss Sophronia (Frona) Harvey, daughter of I. J. Harvey, as the first teacher. Total expenditures for the first year were $425.16 of which a popular subscription raised $282.25. On the first day, October 12th, nine pupils enrolled: Jim, George and Bert Lacey; Owen, Mary, Lillie and Willie Kellogg; Andy Smith; and the teacher's younger sister, Mabel Harvey. Not until 1870 did Salinas get its very own school building when the board erected a two story, two room building on the southeast corner of Front and East Alisal Streets, which was later enlarged to become the East End School. Attendance steadily increased until a new school building was required. The State Legislature authorized a bond issue of $15,000.00 in March 1874 for two purposes—a new school house and a fire house. With these funds, the West End School was built in the fall of 1874 on the site of today's (1974) Roosevelt School. Within a short time the High School met on the second floor to give Salinas a complete system of public education.

Though the Roman Catholic Church under Junipero Serra's leadership had come permanently to the area later known as Monterey County in 1770, the town builders of Salinas were



24. Court House of 1878 in background. Stood in inner courtyard of present main building of Court House. Lot in middle foreground was home of Dr. H. P. Tuttle, site of present Post Office. Right foreground is second building of St. Paul's Episcopal Church.

largely affiliated with various Protestant denominations. Methodist missionaries held the first Protestant religious service in the Salinas Valley during the early 1850's at the tiny community of "Hilltown". Here, and further down the river at Davis and Bardin crossings, "preaching places" and camp meetings were visited by pioneer clergymen through the 1860's. Methodist Church South (or Southern Methodists) organized early in 1868 at Spring School. Members of the first congregation included Mrs. John Sexton and Mrs. Antrobus, wife of a blacksmith at "Confederate Corners" (South Main Street and Hitchcock Road.) Only religious service held in Salinas City on Christmas Day of 1868 was at Riker's new American Hotel where the Methodist Church South had been meeting for two months.

When the new City on the Salinas Plains was barely a year old, preachers of most of the larger denominations held services every Sunday. Two daughters of merchant Isaac Julian Harvey established a Union Sabbath School. They went to Watsonville for strawberries and ice to make ice cream for a benefit social for the project. For Christ-



25. *Jesse D. Carr moved into this house, his new home, just before the election of Grover Cleveland in 1884. Matt Williams bought the house about 1907. It once stood at Church and Howard streets, present location of the Court House Annex.*

mas, 1869, they set up a tree in Myer's Hall and lighted it with common household candles cut in half. Green boughs decorated the walls.

The second oldest religious denomination in Monterey County was the United Presbyterians, organized December 7, 1869 under the leadership of the Rev. W. H. Wilson. The church split into two groups in November 1872 when the Rev. Mr. Wilson and about 15 members started the Central Avenue Presbyterian Church. About this time the Rev. George McCormick arrived and was called to reorganize the remainder of the congregation. He was installed on September 23, 1873 and set a record of about 55 years of service until retirement in 1928. Under his leadership the Presbyterians built the church building in 1875-76, which still stands (1974) on Pajaro Street. Between 1868 and 1874 five Protestant denominations were organized. The other three after the Presbyterians were: 3) Methodist Episcopal Church North, October 1870; 4) Protestant Episcopal Church, August 1873; 5) First Baptist Church, April 1874. The Roman Catholics began drives to build

a church in Salinas in 1877 under the Rev. Father G. Sorrentini. The first church was begun in 1878. M. Hughes was chosen President of a Building Committee in July 1880 to gather funds for the completion of the "new Catholic Church".

Salinas very early had "its full quota of secret, benevolent and temperance" organizations, but the earliest of the lodges were the Odd Fellows and the Masons. The Alisal Lodge No. 163 of the Odd Fellows (I. O. O. F.) was instituted July 31, 1869. The lodge celebrated the anniversary of the founding of the lodge in North America, April



26. Odd Fellows Hall. Contract for building let to B. S. Wilcoxen July 19, 1887 for $11,840.00. Still stands without clock tower, the next large building south of Wells Fargo Bank in 200 block of Main Street.



27. The Salinas Opera House Company headed by Uldarico Hartnell, President, remodeled Central Hall over the Fashion Livery Stable into an opera house (1895). Building still stands and is location of the Greyhound Hotel.

26, 1874 with a parade, an oration by C. L. Thomas of Santa Cruz, a banquet in the Abbott House, and a ball at the skating rink. For a time both the Masons and the Odd Fellows Lodge used the second floor hall of the Eagle Drug Store, on the northwest corner of Main and Gabilan, for meetings.

The Grand Lodge of Masons of the State of California granted a charter to Salinas Lodge of F. & A. M. No. 204 on October 14, 1869, and on November 11, 1869 at 2:00 p. m. was formally constituted. The following were installed to govern the Lodge: Carlisle S. Abbott, Worshipful Master; William Vanderhurst, Senior Warden, and Willis W. Joyce, Junior Warden, plus a full complement of the other necessary officers.

Shortly after the opening of the Salinas City Bank, its president, Jesse D. Carr gave his support to a campaign to incorporate a library association, with $2,500.00 capital, in Salinas for in December 1873 he permitted the papers to be located at the bank for inspection and signature. Publicity for the library was featured in articles which appeared in the Monterey *Democrat*. In the issue of December 27th, the appeal was made that "those who object to the Saloon influences [should support the proposed library]."

A very popular source of entertainment was roller skating. Fourteen men filed articles of incorporation with the County on Novem-



28. Birthplace and boyhood home of John Ernst Steinbeck, 132 Central Avenue at Stone Street. Built in 1897 by J. J. Connor.

ber 6, 1871 for the purpose of buying "Lot L in Block 5 at the corner of Gabilan and Monterey Streets and erect a skating rink thereon". The original incorporation subscribed $2,500 for the proposed capital stock of $4,000 @ $50.00 per share. It was a large rough building with the walls unfinished inside, but the floor was fine. Candles in tin holders illuminated the rink. Four rules read:

"1—Gentlemen will please skate with coats on and hats off.
2—Gents are requested not to smoke or spit on the floor.
3—No loud talking or swearing allowed.
4—Anyone breaking skates, by rough usage, will be charged for breakage".

Directors for the first three months were: I. J. Harvey, Jas. B. Iverson, William Vanderhurst. B. S. Wilcoxen was the builder and the Salinas Masons dedicated the building in early 1872.

The Salinas Masonic Lodge sponsored a ball at the Skating Rink June 24, 1873 at $2.00 per ticket, music furnished by Curtis and Bronson's San Jose Quadrille Band. The local lodge as well as members from seven nearby lodges furnished the committees.

An event beloved by every child was the coming of the circus and they did come to Salinas, even before 1872. Mrs. F. S. Baker (Mabel Harvey) related her memories in 1937:

" . . . our house was on the corner of Gabilan and the alley (between Main and Monterey). We had a pump . . . the circus came in caravans [as] the railroad stopped at San Jose. It was a one-ring circus, and beat every circus that ever came since. You could see what was coming, and [they] had beautiful horses; they used to come to our pump and get water for the elephant and the horses".

They held the circus next door to the Harvey's where Wills Dodge Motor Company is today (1974).

A memory of those first years, not so pleasant, was of the typhoid epidemics which raged, especially in the winter of 1868-69. They pumped water from surface wells, only ten or twelve feet deep which could easily be contaminated. There were no professional nurses. Mrs. Baker recalled that "neighbors took care of each other, sat up with the dying and dead." Some people bought relatively pure water hauled by James McDougall, Sr. from his deep well. Alsop and Rowling drilled numerous deep wells in the early 1870's. One early sanitary control measure taken by the Town Board of Trustees was passage of ordinance No. 23, March 20, 1873, which proclaimed:

"It shall be unlawful for any person or persons to obstruct or stop the flow of water in the slough [the Sanjon] meandering in and around the town . . ."



29. *Salinas High School (1900) once stood in the lot now used for parking opposite the Post Office on West Alisal Street.*



30. The "Baby School" (first and second grades) stood on the site of Clay Street Park at corner of Capitol Street. Mrs. Fannie Walsh was the teacher in 1909. John Steinbeck is fifth from left in the back row; eighth from left in front row is Dorothy Donahue.

Salinas, as a fully chartered City by Act of the California State Legislature signed by the Governor, was confirmed in its adolescence during a financial panic and near depression (1873-1875). After the first prosperous years of the late 60's and early 70's, when the market for grain was expanding, the future seemed very bright. But drought and floods again plagued the farmers. When crops were good, prices declined; freight charges and fees of other middlemen ate up the profits. Unemployment spread among both city and farm workers. Reformers condemned the "land Monopolists", the workers feared the competition of the Chinese — when white workers building the Monterey highway in 1873 receiving $40/month, struck for $2.00/day, they were replaced with Chinese who accepted $31/month. But the greatest blame for the social and political ills of the times fell upon the Southern Pacific Railroad — "the Octopus".

Farmers, workers and reformers organized to pursue a variety of solutions directed at the common enemy. A group of farmers met at Salinas in May 1873 to form a local "grange" of the National Patrons of Husbandry which "offered the surest and most speedy remedy for existing evils", by helping the farmer "to resist the grinding execution of produce speculators". In order to combat the Southern Pacific Company's control over the shipment of grain, Carlisle S. Abbott led the move in 1874 to create California's first narrow gauge, the Monterey and Salinas Valley Railroad.



31. Mike Hughes home. Hughes established his Harness Shop on Main Street in 1868. His home was the first to be illuminated by gas. It stood on present site of Greyhound Depot at corner of Gabilan and Salinas Streets.

Melville Byerly, founder of the Salinas *Index*, a Republican newspaper, in early March 1872, published a letter to the Editor on September 18, 1873 which questioned the outcry against the railroad. The letter credited the railroad as being a great "civilizer" bringing the county seat and adding to the wealth of Salinas. Why then the change? The writer explained that,

> *"The people of California . . . are opposed to railroad mixing up in politics, manipulating primaries, electing United States Senators, etc. . . ."*

Meanwhile the fight for division of the County went on in 1873-74 as well as a campaign to secure a Charter of Incorporation for Salinas from the Legislature. The fight in Monterey County was complicated by the local issue versus the loyalties to the two major national political parties, the Democrats and Republicans. Jesse D. Carr, for example, was a power in the State Democratic organization and normally his support in the election of 1873 would have gone completely to E. C. Tully, the candidate of that party for the Assembly, but Tully lived in the San Benito Valley. Carr stood to have his Gabilan Ranch located in both counties by "Division". Therefore, he gave the appearance of supporting the Republican candidate, James R. Hebbron, who stated his opposition to "Division" in writing. The Republicans of Hollister who



32. *Sam Black home at 418 Pajaro is one of the few houses in Salinas to be occupied continuously by one family to the present day. Mrs. Annie Black is still at home here (1974).*

wanted to vote for Hebbron as a member of the G. O. P. deserted to Tully who promised to follow the will of the majority on "Division". Tully won the election and set out in the Legislature to obtain passage of a bill for "Division" and one for the incorporation of Salinas.

While the editors of the Salinas *Index* and the Monterey *Democrat* edited by John W. Leigh, that had moved to Salinas with the relocation of the County Court House, exchanged bitter recriminations, but joint denunciations of Tully, the wheels of the Legislature turned out both bills and the Governor signed them. San Benito became a new county on February 12, 1874. The *Democrat* John W. Leigh wrote:

> *"Well San Benito, fare thee well. We do not forget, nor forgive the way you went, nor the means used in going . . . we can live without you".*

The Governor signed the "Act to Incorporate Salinas City" on March 4, 1874.

Almost a year earlier under the provisions of the Incorporation of the Town of Salinas by the County in 1872 an election for five members of the Board of Trustees had been held. Elected on May 5, 1873 were:

B. T. Nixon, M. Hughes, B. S. Wilcoxen, Dr. H. P. Tuttle and I. J. Harvey. The Board chose Harvey as President on May 7, 1873. He had grown up on a farm in Indiana, became a merchant, migrated to California in the Gold Rush, operated a hotel and served as Judge in Lassen County as well as prospected for gold and silver. In the summer of 1868 he joined with his son, A. B. Harvey, to found Harvey & Co., general merchandise merchants, and in the winter of 1868-69 built a home which still stands (1974).

When the Legislature passed the Act of Incorporation, the City Clerk, M. Farley, wrote large in the Minute Book:

"Office of the Mayor and Common Council of Salinas City. Present were: I. J. Harvey, Mayor and M. Hughes, B. S. Wilcoxen, B. T. Nixon and H. P. Tuttle, common councilmen . . ."

Upon receipt of the copy of the Act of Incorporation on March 18th the Council appointed William Vanderhurst and William Burbeck to bring the number to the required seven. Salinas City was on its way toward its first hundred years. Between 1870 and 1880 the City grew in population from 599 to 1865. In the latter year there were 102 Chinese and 8 blacks included in the total.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It would have been impossible to publish this little book without the devoted help of many groups and persons. Mayor Hibino and the City Council gave their unanimous approval and blessing to the Centennial Celebration, appropriated "seed money" to underwrite the projects and gave the committees relatively free reign in planning and executing them. The Council also authorized the use of staff time, equipment and expertise. This has been given cheerfully and generously by City Manager Bob Christofferson; Bill Willsie, Senior Administrative Assistant; Secretaries Mrs. Dottie Doughty and Mrs. Linda Walters, and the Engineering Department. Other departmental staff members have assisted in this and other projects of the Centennial.

The hard working and efficient subcommittees and their chairmen have created the long list of colorful events listed in the Program. A sincere thank you should be given to the following: Hugh McDevitt for developing the map of historic sites; Joel Weaver and Steve Magyar in obtaining advertising and financial support; John G. Hughes and the Monterey County Historical Society, Inc. for permission to reproduce numerous photographs, and to Monterey Savings and Loan Association, Lacey Automotive Parts Company, Dorothy and Bernice Donahue and Mrs. Annie Black for the use of individual photographs.

MAYORS OF THE CITY OF SALINAS

I. J. HARVEY ..... March 1874 - December 1874
WM. VANDERHURST ..... December 1874 - April 1875
H. S. BALL ..... April 1875 - April 1886; April 1892 - April 1894
W. J. HILL ..... April 1886 - April 1892; April 1898 - July 1898
T. HARRIS ..... April 1894 - August 1897
C. FRANCEE ..... April 1897 - April 1898; July 1898 - April 1900
T. RENISON ..... April 1900 - July 1907
F. S. CLARK ..... July 1907 - July 1909; July 1923 - July 1927
F. A. ABBOTT ..... July 1909 - July 1911
C. N. THORUP ..... July 1915 - July 1917
G. A. DAUGHERTY ..... July 1917 - July 1923
D. A. MADEIRA ..... July 1927 - April 1931
DR. E. J. LEACH ..... April 1931 - July 1933; May 1936 - July 1943
V. J. BARLOGIO ..... July 1933 - May 1936
EDSON G. THOMAS ..... July 1943 - July 1945
G. C. TAYLOR ..... July 1945 - July 1949
E. J. RAFFETTO ..... July 1949 - July 1953
D. G. BARDIN ..... July 1953 - April 1955
DR. JAMES H. McPHARLIN ..... April 1955 - June 1955
ALVA ANDRUS ..... July 1955 - July 1957
ARTHUR C. ATTERIDGE ..... July 1957 - January 1963
LAWRENCE H. STRUVE ..... January 1963 - June 1965
G. SID GADSBY ..... July 1965 - July 1971
JACK BARNES ..... July 1971 - July 1973
HENRY HIBINO ..... July 1973 -

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Dorothy Donahue, Vice Chairman Steven G. Magyar, Vice Chairman

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LIAISON WITH CHURCHES AND RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
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PARADES COMMITTEE ..... Francis Ingraham, Chairman

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